The New Big Flats Times

Issue 29

Town Information:

Municipal Campus: 476 Maple Street Big Flats

Town Hall: Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm 562-8443

Community Center: Monday-Friday 8am to 9pm Saturday by Appt.

Office: Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm 562-8443, ext.303

Town Court: Monday- Friday 8:30am-3:30pm

Big Flats Town Board:

- Supervisor Edward Fairbrother
- Council Lee
 Giammichele
- Council Andy Gillette
- Council Bob Adams
- Council Mike Saglibene
- Town Clerk Linda Cross
- Meetings:

2nd Wednesday at 4:30pm

4th Wednesday at 7:00pm

December 2014



Please take time to fill out the survey on the back cover and drop it off or mail it in to help us serve you better.

What's Going on in the Town?

- If you have not looked at our new website please do so, we are making changes to better it all the time.
- If you have an event going on in Big Flats please let us know and we may be able to put it on our website / newsletter
- We are now accepting credit cards as a method of payment for your convenience

Citizen of the Year Award



Robert Newlun was presented with the CITIZEN OF THE YEAR award October 1, 2014. Bob has put in countless hours to help make Big Flats what it is today. He has been an incredible asset to the Town Hall as well as the Community Center. Bob always has a smile on his face which brightens every body's mood, even when it comes to paying

your Taxes. Bob was the Tax Collector for 19 years, he has been on many boards and committees, and coordinated many activities for the residents. He definitely deserves this award. Thank you for all you do





From the Town Supervisor

General - I can't thank the Town Board and all the employees of the town enough for their support and cooperation during this year's transition. We have entered into a new era of government with the cuts in state aid and sales tax reducing the town's revenue by \$425,000 per year starting in 2018. The Town Board has made a concerted effort to not work on just a one year plan but a five year plan to keep taxes inline and not to cut services to our constituents. In 2014 we will spend a record 1.2 million on our roads and again in 2015 DPW will spend 1 million to make sure we have the solid infrastructure for years to come. Before the end of the year we will be introducing high speed fiber service for businesses and homes (Video, phone, high speed internet and home security) by working with Empire Access, a completely USA

based company. This will help us market to new businesses and current businesses with the best internet technology available in the southern tier I86 corridor. Along with this we will market for new businesses to create jobs and home sales. Yes we lost Sikorsky, 100's of jobs and assessed value, but we have been working hard to gain new and exciting opportunities in 2014 and beyond. We are working with the Ceramic Corridor group (Dr. Alan Rea), to make the old Sweitzers building into a high bay incubator for new startup businesses. Field and Stream, Lumber Liquidators, Orange Leaf, Techline, Isaac and several other small and midsize businesses have opened in 2014. The Town of Big Flats will host an inaugural meeting of stakeholders to discuss the potential for a collaborative and strategic initiative to develop the I-86 corridor into a competitive economic development hub while enhancing

the vitality of adjacent communities.

Water department – The water department as of the first of the year came directly under my office to put together a five year plan for major improvements to this important utility. Some of the improvements were putting together a valve exercising program, updating the Scada system, shared services with the Elmira Water Board and updating the fleet. By putting this five year plan together, this will insure that the water district will be a solid utility at a fair price for years to come. The consolidation of District 1,2 and 3 will be in place in the first quarter of 2015.

I invite the public to attend a Town Board meeting, the 2nd Wednesday at 4:30PM and the fourth Wednesday at 7PM

2015 proposed budget – The Town Board will hold the line on taxes in 2015 with a zero tax rate increase. The budget again in 2015 will have a major road improvement plan and no cuts in services.



Thank You to the Following Sponsors:

Businesses:

Ken's Service Station

Walter J. Kent Funeral Home

Wren's Auto Center, LLC

Patrons:

Jo Ann & Jerry Schucker

Timothy & Connie Yu

Judy & Dean Zimmerman

Mary Ann Balland

Emily Barker

Gene Herber

Marino Family

Senior Flexibility Exercise Class

Charles and Muriel Friend

Friends:

Willard & Marlene Heikkila

From the Community Center

Private Parties Welcome.

Having a birthday party, giving a baby shower, or planning a holiday gathering? The Community Center is ready and available to meet your needs. Call the Center office for more details. (607) 562-8443 ext 303

Activities

There are many activities to participate in and events to attend. Would you be interested in playing cards, are you crafty or want to learn to be, looking for exercise programs to join, or learn to cook Italian style? Want to socialize and have a meal? Do your kids like to play games? Well the Big Flats Community Center has it all! Check out the monthly activity flyer on the website for details. Looking for a new program and have ideas to share? The Center staff will be happy to help you set up a new activity to share with residents!

Upcoming Events

The Big Flats Lions club sponsors a Blood Drive with the American Red Cross approximately every 56 days.

Please consider becoming a donor. Save the next few dates: December 2, 2014 and February 24, 2015.

AARP Driver safety classes are offered at the Community Center. Most insurance companies will give a discount on the cost of your policy. Contact your agent for specific details and the monthly flyer for scheduled dates.

Thank You

The Community Center staff continues to keep the flow of parties, meetings, and events all in sync, while keeping the building clean and safe. The custodial staff, (Ann Stein, Bob Petrie, Tom Saunders & Erich Bartsch) and the Director (Patricia Hartigan-Huten) all work well together as a team. Thank you to Rebecca Preston for her service and dedication to the Community Center. We wish her well in her new endeavor. We'd like to welcome Terri O'Rourke to the Community Center. Terri will be joining the team as the part time clerk in the office.

A great big thank you goes to Pat Schichtel for all her amazing and beautiful landscaping work around the municipal campus. The grounds have never looked better.

<u>Donations</u>

Donations are always welcomed! Check with your employer for details on donating through the United Way campaign. Remember to specify your donation be sent to the Town of Big Flats Community Center.

Annual **FOOD DRIVE** to benefit the Big Flats Food Pantry. Donations of canned foods and toiletries are accepted in the foyer through the end of December. "Building a better **COMMUNITY** by fighting hunger today."



From the Town Clerk

For your convenience you can now see your Tax information on the Town's website at www.bigflatsny.gov On the front page under Quick Links you'll see Town and County Tax Bills. You can search by using last name, property address, tax map #, and also bill number for the years 2008- present.

Contact your Tax Collector's Office if you do not receive your Tax bill by the 2nd week in January or if you need to change any contact information at (607)562-8443 ext.203



DOG CONTROL INFORMATION

Due to the SPCA backing out of our contract as of April 1st, 2014 we were forced to look elsewhere for Dog Control and Humane coverage. We have contracted with Southern Tier Dog Control to do our Dog Control. They have been very dependable and are willing to work with the Big Flats Residents in regards to animal control.

The Elmira Animal Shelter will handle any humane issues that arise in our Town. The SPCA will still house and adopt animals from there current location on State Route 352.

REMINDER:

All dogs 4 months of age and older MUST be licensed in the Town you live in.

Licenses need to get renewed each year (you can license your dog for as long as your rabies vaccine is good)

If you move, change your phone number, or no longer have your dog, It is YOUR responsibility to make the Clerk's office aware of this!

If you are late 60 days or more on a renewal you will receive a \$5.00 late fee added to your license fee.

Please feel free to contact your Clerk's Office with any questions or concerns.

Clerk's Office-(607)562-8443 ext. 201 or 202

Southern Tier Dog Control-(607)846-3640/(315)956-4281 SPCA- (607)732-1827 Elmira Animal Shelter-(607)737-5807/(607)737-5767 /(607)735-8600



Note from Southern Tier Dog Control:

Southern Tier Dog Control would like to let everyone know we are here for the Big Flats Community as your dog control officer. We can be reached 24/7 at (607)846-3640 or (315)956-4281. Any questions regarding dog license and enforcement please call and we will be happy to answer it for you.

Thank you and we look forward to serving this community!

Nancy Pearson

From the Code Department

The town continues to utilize it's carefully structured comprehensive plan in a way which:

- Preserves and enhances es it's existing rural character while accommodating a balanced mix of recreational, residential, commercial and industrial uses.
- Encourages future development that is of quality design that will foster the

character of the Town, and meet the necessary longterm needs of the community.

• Encourages future development that minimizes negative impacts on natural resources, infrastructure, and neighboring uses in order to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

Both residential and commercial development continue to remain steady, which is a good indication that the local economy remains reasonably healthy. An important part of this development involves protecting its citizens as well as existing and future developed properties from flooding. The Town of Big Flats participates in a program (CRS) which allows the community to receive reduced flood insurance rates. This program requires the town to regu-

development and provide educational resources for the community. The town of Big Flats website www.bigflatsny.gov provides links and information for residents. Also, as an annual outreach requirement, please review the flooding information on page 8

From the Town Attorney

I would first like to say that I am honored to have been appointed Attorney for the Town of Big Flats. Working with the team here including each and every employee has been a total pleasure. The Town of Big Flats is blessed with one of the best staff of employees around.

Next, I am amazed at how much legal work is involved and most of it is in areas that I had little experience with but I am learning. Learning new areas of law is very challenging and enjoyable. While my "job" is part time, it has hardly been that in reality.

Every day I deal with issues from animal control to zoning and fiber optic cable. It is all very forward looking and each gain we make is fulfilling and good for the Town. One legal issue that periodically has raised its head due to concerns by neighbors is about vacant property and houses that have not been listed for sale, and are not being taken care of. Some properties have been vacant for many months. Some may date back to 2008 when the recession began. These residences have become known as

"Voodoo houses." Residents have every right to be concerned about these houses. What causes this is that the owners have moved without paying their mortgage. The bank holding the mortgage then either does or does not start a foreclosure but then never fully completes it. But they don't take title so they can sell the property because once they take title they have obligations to place the property on the market within a certain period of time per Federal regulation. They don't want that pressure. This has been a problem

We have received calls about some of these properties. Feel free to call me about ones you suspect are in this category and we will look into it. I will tell you trying to get even the name of the bank or financial entity that presently holds the mortgages can take a lot of time. Also they are not always willing to cooperate on letting us know of their intentions. The State legislature had a bill proposed to correct some of the problems that this has caused but it is now in committee and not yet being voted on. We are trying to get a handle on this situation.

From the Youth Department

The Youth Department has been busy the past few months with a variety of programs, events and meetings. This summer the department completed another successful year of Summer TAFFY, celebrating 58 years. We are now in the process of our Winter TAFFY/Bingo. Open to students in Kindergarten -4th grade. Held on Friday evenings from 5-7pm at the Big Flats Community Center.

The Youth Department has been running in conjunction with the Big Flats Elementary School and the Horseheads Bus Garage an After School Program for the past 8 years. Students in grades 3 and 4 are dropped off at the Big Flats Community Center, get a head start on their homework, do either gardening, board games, chess club or cooking and then enjoy a healthy snack. Promoting healthy life style skills.



Our Youth Organization (YO) had a successful summer, finishing in 1st place at the Big Flats Community Days Parade. The group decorated a town truck and flatbed, celebrating 58 Years of Summer TAFFY. Along with the Horseheads School District our programs promote the Character Education traits; Respect, Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Caring, Citizenship and Fairness.

Our **Teen Commission** held their 8th Annual Fall Festival. The event was Saturday, October 25th. This year's event kicked off the day with a Soup and Apple tasting along with the Big Flats Fire Department Open House.

The 19th Annual Senior Citizens Night Out by the Teen Commission is Saturday, November 22, 2014 from 7pm until 9pm. Music will be provided by Bobby K's DJ. Paul. Hors d'oeuvre, punch, coffee will be provided. Door prizes, singing and plenty of dancing.



From the Code Department cont. Flash Flooding Safety Tips

If you live near a stream, in a low lying area, or even in an urban area, you could be affected by flash flooding. During heavy rain, stream levels can rise rapidly and overflow banks, roadside ditches can overflow, low lying areas can quickly fill up, and storm water sewers can back up because there is just too much water for drains to handle. In winter, the threat of flooding is not gone. A winter warm up with even a moderate rain event can cause rapid snow melt resulting in flooding. Ice jams can quickly back up water in streams and rivers causing flooding.

- Never walk or drive through standing or running water. Even six inches of water can knock a person off their feet. Just two feet of water can float a car. Drowning is the number one cause of death in floods.
- •Do not drive around barricades. Remember roads, culverts and bridges can be undercut making them unsafe for travel.
- ·Stay away from downed power lines. Electrocution is the second most common reason for death in a flood. Electricity travels readily through water.
- ·Have the local utility turn off gas and electricity to your home. Don't have service restored until all appliances and systems have been inspected and cleaned by a qualified person.

•Remember that some appliances, such as televisions, can hold a charge even after being unplugged.

Be alert for gas leaks. Don't smoke, use candles or lanterns, and do not light an open flame unless you're certain natural gas is not present.

- Be aware of carbon monoxide hazards, an odorless, colorless gas that can cause asphyxiation. Carbon monoxide is formed when fossil fuels are burned, including kerosene, propane and charcoal. Do not use gas or charcoal grills indoors for heating or cooking, and crack windows when using alternative heating sources to allow fresh air into your home and carbon monoxide to escape.
- Be ready to evacuate when told to do so. Pack medications, baby supplies, food and water, and any other needed specialty items to take with you.
- Remember that unless otherwise specified, shelters do not allow pets to be brought inside. Make arrangements for the care of pets in advance of an emergency.
- Follow the designated emergency routes during an evacuation. Other routes may be for emergency traffic only, or could be congested, flooded or damaged.

FLOODING AND EMERGENCIES...

once every 30

If you live in or near a 100 Year Floodplain, you have a 25% chance of being flooded

years. Flooding from small streams, roadside ditches,

ponds, and lakes have caused widespread damage to

homes and properties in our tri-county area. In the last 150 years, rivers and streams have inundated various

communities from Hornell to Wellsburg on an average

of once every 4 1/2 years. Find out your flood hazard by looking at Flood Maps (FIRMs) at local government

offices. Call your jurisdiction to find out where. ALL development in a floodplain, not just

building construction, requires local permits. It is a

violation to dump debris, including yard wastes, into a

creek, stream or river and it should always be reported

to your municipality. A building in the floodplain

that sustains substantial damage or is substantially improved

must be brought into compliance with current

standards. The floodplain provides a green space for protection

of streams from development and the forces of erosion. Never ride bicycles, ATVs or motorcycles

on flood control dikes as the grass that is ruined actually

helps to hold the dike together in high water

events. Area wetlands can help improve water

quality by filtering out impurities and nutrients from

runoff. Homeowner Insurance policies do not cover

damage to your home from flooding. Residents in

Chemung, Steuben and Schuyler Counties can obtain

Flood Insurance through the National Flood Insurance

Program (NFIP) cover flood damages to your home and its contents.

Without Flood Insurance, many residents

have lost their homes and belongings due to

flooding, and have never recovered financially.

Insurance through NFIP can also be purchased

by renters to insure their personal belongings.

There's a 30 day waiting period for coverage to

begin. Find out about NFIP today, don't wait until the

next flood to find out your home is not covered.

Many municipalities in our tricounty area participate in

the Community Rating System which can lower the

price of flood insurance for the residents,

making it even more affordable!

Residents of Chemung, Steuben and Schuyler Counties are fortunate to have the Flood Warning Service (FWS) working for them. Environmental Emergency Services, Inc. (EES) is a non-profit organization, funded by the three Counties and the municipalities of the tri-county area. FWS is one of the funded projects of EES. Storm information gathered by precipitation and river gauges, the National Weather Service, and local observers are plotted on maps and entered into computer programs by volunteers of the FWS. Flooding predictions and forecasts are then relayed to the Emergency Management Offices for the three counties. Emergency Management officials are then able to give warnings through the Emergency Alert System (EAS), evacuate residents if necessary, and take precautionary steps to save lives and limit property damage. Vehicles with PA systems may also be used to alert neighborhoods of an emergency. As a resident in or near a flood hazard area, it is important for you to heed all

warnings, follow the directions given in emergency messages, and make sure you have a battery powered radio or NOAA Weather Radio to receive warnings as they are issued. NOAA Weather Radios can be purchased in a wide variety of local electronics stores, home improvement centers, and department stores. It's one of the best investments you can make in your family's safety! For more media infor-

mation and to volunteer with FWS, please check out our website at:

www.highwater.org

You can help to protect your home from flood damage several ways:

Raise your appliances and utilities above the flood level. Standpipes and pumps can also be installed to help prevent water from damaging your home. You can raise your entire house above the flood level.

- If flooding is not deep, you may be able to improve drainage to keep water away from your home.
- Install a water-tight seal to keep floodwater out of your well.
- Waterproof your walls and place watertight closures

over the doorways. This method should be used on homes with basements or if water will not get over two feet deep.

· Emergency measures include sandbagging and moving furniture before water enters your home. Remember that sewers and drainage structures can also back up and be a cause of flooding. Your local government offices can help with these and other retrofitting ideas, please call!

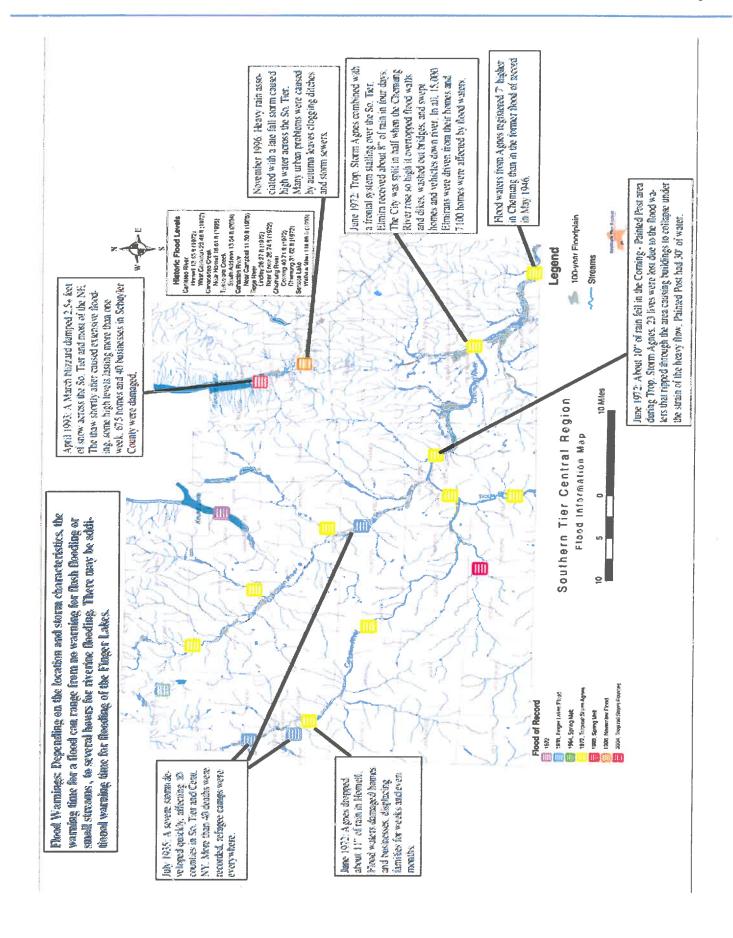
Our Local EAS Radio and TV Stations are:

WENY-FM, WKPQ-FM, WNKI-FM, WFLR-AM/FM, WENY-TV, WETM-TV For more information on emergency planning, and local hazards, visit the following websites:
www.redcross.org
www.ready.gov
www.fema.gov
www.highwater.org
www.chemungcounty.com
floodsmart.org
www.schuylercounty.us
www.steubencony.org

Phone Numbers:
Chemung County Emergency
Management: 607-737-2096
Chemung County Planning
Dept. 607-737-5510
Schulyer County Emergency
Management: 607-535-8200
Schuyler County Planning
Dept. 607-535-7162
Steuben County Emergency
Management: 607-664-2700
Steuben County Planning
Dept. 607-664-2268
DEC Flood Control,
Horseheads: 607-739-0809

Report all illegal flood plain development or dumping to your local code enforcement officer or municipal government office.

Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation:
607-739-2009
Schuyler County Soil and Water Conservation:
607-535-9650
Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation:
607-776-7398



From the Parks Commission







Liz Farr Pavilion



Cooper Pavilion

The Parks commission has been reinstated, they are in the process of evaluating the parks and are looking for feedback.

The committee is putting together a survey that will be available on the Town's website at www.bigflatsny.gov on or about January 1st, 2015.

Please take time to fill this out so we can better serve you







Sperr Park

From the Public Works Department

The Town's Department of Public Works (DPW) went through several changes this year; expanding the duties of Austin, Chris Deputy DPW Commissioner, welcoming Andy and Avery as the Town's new DPW Commissioner in February. Chris' experience and efforts have been instrumental in ensuring the success of the shared services agreewith Chemung ment

County.

This agreement provides the County **DPW** Commissioner's services as Town DPW Commissioner. Chris and Andy have worked side by side to build on the Town's many DPW strengths, while bringing new partnerships and technologies, and completing an aggressive summer work



program for the Town.

Anytime a department goes through change, a handful of individuals can be counted on to keep the programs moving. Our steady hands this year have been Laura Sullivan and Pam Kowulich, who managed to keep us on a straight course, ensuring that the offices ran smoothly and efficiently. In addition to their many office duties, Laura and Pam provide the friendly voice on the other end of the phone line, while also helping the public with billing questions and pavilion rentals. The DPW recently hired Shondrea Cobb to help modernize their record keeping sys-



Though the Water Department was reformed as an independent unit in January, it was reunited with the DPW after the July resignation of Water Supervisor John Dufresne.



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Address/ Phone	
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Money and form may be left in Town Clerk's office or mailed to:	
NBFT 476 Maple Street, Big Flats, NY 14814	

The Town worked with Hunt Engineers, Architects, and Surveyors of Big Flats to develop a 5-year improvement capital plan for the water districts. At the same time, we have been moving forward on a plan to merge water districts 1, 2, and 3, with the ultimate goal of rate stabilization and improved services to water users. The Town has also been working with the Elmira Water Board, developing a connection to share water near the shopping plazas along The connection CR64. would provide a stable water source for the Town, even in the event of high water, while also eliminating a dead-end line and improving water quality for the Elmira Water Board.

From the Assessor

Enhanced STAR renewal forms will be mailed out December 1st, 2014. They must be returned to the Assessor's Office by February 28th, 2015.

All STAR forms must be postmarked NO LATER than February 28th, 2015 to be accepted.

Our summer work program proved to be the largest ever this year - we had a budget of over 1.5 million dollars for combined maintenance and capital improvements. In addition, we were able to increase the number of rehabilitated roads through agreements with both Chemung and Steuben County, saving funds on the cost of our road grinding Projects this year inprojects. cluded road grinding rehabilitations, asphalt milling and paving, slurry seals, chip seals (oil and stone), and various drainage improvement projects.

A major project was developed and carried out this year on Halderman Hollow Road. Town crews improved ditches, installed new drainage structures, cleared trees from the R-O-W, and rehabilitated the roadway sub-base by grinding and oil injecting the old pavement. We also paved the roadway with asphalt binder and an oil and stone wearing surface.

Further progressing the theme of shared services, we executed an agreement this year with the Soil and Water Conservation District. Soil and Water mowed our drainage swales this summer, saving approximately a third of the cost.





In an effort to provide an expanded service to Town residents, the DPW placed a large organic materials dumpster at the DPW facility. The intent was to create an additional way for residents to dispose of grass and leaves. We also maintained our low-cost resident drop-off agreement with Black Gold Top-soil on South Corning Road.

The DPW has been participating in the reformed Parks Committee meetings, working with appointed residents and board members to improve the quality of our park system. We hope to bring new venues to our parks as an outgrowth of a new Parks Master Plan.

New faces, new equipment, new relationships, a continuance of our strengths, and growth in our use of technology, including new phone, computer, and fuel systems, all contributed to a successful 2014 for the Town of Big Flats DPW. Even with the change, the glue that held us together was the experience of our employees, and their desire to move the Town forward. We look forward to an even better 2015!

The New Big Flats Times 476 Maple Street Big Flats, NY 14814

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The New Big Flats Times

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The state of the s
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Address
Email
Phone Number
Please pick ONE choice and mail or drop of to Big Flats Town Hall
Attn: Newsletter

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